

**TOWN/VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD  
JOINT BOARD MEETING  
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN  
BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES  
Minutes of February 24, 2014**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Trustee Chair Dennis Donahue, Trustees Kevin T. Beal, K. David Maxwell (6:15 p.m.), and James R. Wilson (absent). Also present were Town Manager Robert Lewis, Acting Village Manager Stephen Fitzhugh, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Doug Reed (Utility Office Manager), Kreig Pinkham (Washington County Youth Service Bureau), James Secor (Boys & Girls Club of Northfield), Tawnya Kristen (Green Mountain Transit Agency), David Armstrong (Green Mountain Transit Agency), Sonya Bourne, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

A Public Hearing for the purpose of providing written or oral views on the Warned Town Articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot at the Annual Town Meeting on March 4, 2014 was warned to immediately precede the Select Board's regular meeting. Select Board Chair Quinn called the Public Hearing to order at 6:02 p.m. He then opened the floor to any member of the public who wished to discuss the Australian Ballot articles (listed below).

**Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$6,000 for the Boys & Girls Club of Northfield under the leadership of the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club? (Australian Ballot).** Kreig Pinkham from the Washington County Youth Service Bureau stated that his organization last year inherited the operation of the Northfield Boys & Girls Club from the Boys and Girls Club of the White River Valley. At the time, there was some uncertainty regarding its future operation but he now believes that the transition worked very well. The Northfield Boys & Girls Club now is open five (5) days a week from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The main programs are the Teen Center and Project Learn, which is a tutoring service. On average, about ten (10) young people use the facility each day; Mr. Pinkham believes that this is a good start. James Secor, who is the Northfield Program Director, added that the Northfield Boys & Girls Club provides a safe space for local youth to engage in "healthy growth." The facility has numerous community partners, including Norwich University. In addition, there are plans to develop a garden program with the assistance of local farmers. Selectman Bradley asked how the \$6,000 requested would be spent. Mr. Pinkham stated that staffing costs are about \$70,000 and there has been an \$8,000 deficit. Therefore, the \$6,000 will go directly to cover these expenses. Chair Quinn thanked Mr. Pinkham and Mr. Secor for attending tonight's meeting.

**Article 9. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for the Washington County Diversion Program? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 10. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,500 for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 11. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Central Vermont Adult Basic Education? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 12. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for the Central Vermont Council on Aging? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 13. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Central Vermont Community Action Council? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 14. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Circle (formerly Battered Women's Services and Shelter)? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 15. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Good Beginnings of Central Vermont? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 16. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 17. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living? (Australian Ballot)** Trustee Beal has worked with a committee that coordinates with the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) and he confirmed their good work.

**Article 18. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$850 for the People's Health and Wellness Clinic? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 19. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for the Family Center of Washington County? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 20. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for Home Share Now? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 21. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$500 for Prevent Child Abuse Vermont? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

**Article 22. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for the Friends of the Winooski River? (Australian Ballot)** Village Manager Fitzhugh is a member of this organization and he noted that the Friends of the Winooski River address the serious problems now affecting the Winooski River and its tributaries, which includes our Dog River. He added that the Friends of the Winooski River were very helpful to Northfield when riverbank restoration work was done along the Dog River near the Wellfield after Tropical Storm Irene caused severe damage.

**Article 23. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$350 for the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County? (Australian Ballot)** There was no discussion.

There being no other questions or comments, the Public Hearing adjourned at 6:15 p.m. The Joint Board Meeting began immediately.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- a. **Tawnya Kristen, Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA): Northfield/Montpelier Commuter Service.** Ms. Kristen, who is GMTA's Community Relations Manager, stated that the Town Selectmen had requested that GMTA look into altering the operating schedule for the Northfield/Montpelier Commuter in order to better accommodate state workers, etc. In preparation for this potential schedule change, GMTA conducted a survey to gauge the opinion of commuter service riders and the general public. David Armstrong, who is the GMTA's Transit Planner, added that riders were provided with a printed survey that was in addition to the online survey on the GMTA website. Sixty-three (63) surveys were completed by today's deadline. Regarding the possibility of the commuter service schedule starting twenty-five (25) minutes earlier each morning and ending twenty (20) minutes later each evening, the survey responders stated that ten percent (10%) would use the service less, thirty-two percent (32%) would use it more, and fifty-seven percent (57%) said that it would not change for them. The GMTA staff has concluded that the proposed revised schedule would result in an overall increase in ridership. Unless there is dissent tonight from the Northfield Select Board, this new schedule will be presented to the GMTA Board for approval at its next meeting (03/18/14). If approved, the new schedule will go into effect on April 14, 2014 (by which time new route schedules will have been printed and distributed). Selectman Denny asked if Norwich University (NU) students had been included in the survey. Mr. Armstrong spoke to a few students but it was difficult for them to predict how the revised schedule would affect them because they don't yet know exactly when their future courses would be held. Selectman Denny would like commuting NU students encouraged to use public transportation in order to cut down on the number of them parking on streets near the NU campus. Ms. Kristen stated that GMTA has been doing some outreach to the NU community in order to encourage use of the commuter service by students, faculty, and staff. Trustee Beal asked how the connection between the Northfield/Montpelier Commuter and the Burlington Express was working out. Mr. Armstrong stated that if the commuter driver is informed that one of his/her passengers plans to take the express, he can radio ahead so that it will wait until the commuter arrives. However, currently there is no way to accommodate someone who works a full day in Burlington because there is not enough money in the present budget to expand the commuter service period early enough in the morning and late enough in the evening. Selectman Gadbois thought that conducting this survey before changing the route schedule was a very good idea. Ms. Kristen and Mr. Armstrong both plan to be present at the Northfield Town Meeting next week (03/04/14) in order to answer any questions.

**V. JOINT DISCUSSION**

- a. Municipal Building Copier Replacement Recommendations.** Utility Office Manager Doug Reed prepared a memorandum that described his research over the past few months regarding the proposed acquisition of two (2) new photocopiers to be located in the Municipal Building. These copiers would replace the current copiers that were purchased in 2007 and for which the municipality can no longer obtain a service agreement due to their age. Since these new copiers can be used to copy, print, scan, and fax, the municipality would be able to eliminate a few printers as well as the current fax machine, which should result in considerable savings in toner purchases, etc. Mr. Reed recommends purchasing the copiers from Canon Solutions America (CSA), which is the low bidder as it is willing to provide a trade-in discount for the current copiers. The projected total cost is \$3,464.60, which includes the service agreement. Chair Quinn asked if this amount was in the current fiscal year budget. Mr. Reed stated that the Town has enough money on hand to pay for its share of this purchase but the Village would need to put funds into the next fiscal year's budget. Chair Quinn asked if the printers being eliminated would be taken out of service immediately. Mr. Reed said that they would be used until their toner supply was exhausted. Manager Fitzhugh added that the municipality would benefit by not having to purchase a wide variety of toner products. Selectman Denny asked if Mr. Reed recommended purchasing or leasing these copiers. Mr. Reed said that although there are advantages and disadvantages to either option, he felt that purchasing was more cost effective if you planned to keep the copiers longer than five (5) years. Trustee Beal asked what would happen if the copiers failed before then. Mr. Reed stated that CSA provides excellent copier repair service, usually arriving within two (2) hours of a call for service. He added that the advantage of having two (2) copiers in the building is that you can still conduct normal business even when one is out of order. Mr. Reed added that the service agreement would be for five (5) years and would cover the cost of everything except copy paper and staples. Motion from Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to authorize the purchase of two (2) new photocopiers from CSA. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**
- b. Village Common Rehabilitation Project Update.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that he and Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi recently had conversation with Don Weston (Don Weston Excavating, Inc.), the project's construction contractor, regarding his company's willingness to install conduits on the west side of the Village Common so that the TDS Telecom cables there can be buried. We are now waiting for his quote. If it is not cost effective, the Village's utility crew will install the conduit themselves while coordinating with Mr. Weston. TDS Telecom then will install its cable into the conduit for \$54,000, which would bring the total cost of burying the cable to about \$74,000. The goal is to eliminate the need for utility poles on the Village Common, which would make the area more attractive not just for the general public but also for potential new businesses. Selectman Denny agreed that a more attractive downtown area could be an economic draw. Selectman Goslant is concerned that having the utility crew perform the work might prolong the construction period on the Village Common, which will be an added disruption for the Depot Square merchants, etc. He would prefer that the construction contractor used his own specialized equipment and complete the work faster. Manager Fitzhugh emphasized that the utility crew would coordinate its work with the construction contractor so that it would be done simultaneously with the other construction in the area. Chair Quinn would have liked this matter to have been brought up earlier so that it could have been an article on the Town Meeting Warning so that voters could have expressed their views about this on Town Meeting Day. Trustee Beal noted that since this matter does not require voter authorization, it could be brought up at the Town Meeting as "non-binding business." Chair Quinn asked from where the funding for this would come. Manager Fitzhugh stated that surplus funds in the Village Highway budget would pay for this. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio added that these undesignated funds had been used in the past to cover the overage in the cost of installing streetlights on the Village Common. Manager Fitzhugh noted that the state and federal funds being used for the rehabilitation project cannot be used for this part of the project. Chair Quinn stated that since voters have already authorized this funding, he has no objection to seeking public opinion during the "non-binding business" discussion during Town Meeting.

- c. **LED Streetlight Replacement Project Update.** Manager Fitzhugh said that he and Mr. Reed now are working on the bid documents for the purchase of the lighting fixtures and for the labor to install them. The bid proposals should go out in mid-March 2014.
- d. **Town/Village Merger Transition Update.** Trustee Beal said that the committee will start looking at reconciling Town and Village ordinances and other such matters after Town Meeting Day.
- e. **Town Manager Search Process Update.** Trustee Beal, who is chair of the Town Manager Search Committee, stated that the advertisement has been finalized and should soon start appearing in print and online. The committee now is identifying community leaders who would like to become part of the committee that will conduct the initial review of candidates. One local business owner already has been contacted. The deadline for letters of interest is Monday, March 24, 2014, and the hope is that VLCT will forward a ranked list of applicants to the committee by the end of the month. The next step would be to hold phone interviews. The goal is to have the candidate chosen by June 1, 2014 so that there will be a transition period before the new manager takes charge of the merged municipality on July 1, 2014. Manager Lewis said that he would be willing to help out during the transition period.

#### **VI. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Liquor License Renewal Applications**
  - 1. **South Village Mobil.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. **Tops Market.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Tobacco License Renewal Applications**
  - 1. **South Village Mobil.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. **Tops Market.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### **VII. BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN**

- a. **Approval of Minutes: February 10, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Minutes: February 20, 2014 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Quinn abstaining.**
- c. **Approval of Bills: Warrant #17-14.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #17-14 in the amount of \$216,814.99. Selectman Goslant asked if we are paying more for animal control services or if these expenses are being billed differently. Manager Lewis confirmed that we are paying more and this is why we are looking for a less expensive holding facility. Selectman Goslant noted another legal bill for a certain matter. Manager Lewis confirmed that he authorized this expense as it is dedicated to closing out this concern. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through February 16, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$53,515.80. Selectman Gadbois asked what had happened to the money that was used for the former Ambulance Supervisor's salary. Manager Lewis said that it now is going towards part-time employee expenses. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Approval of Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) Structures Grant Rescission (Fairground Road Bridge).** Manager Lewis explained that the AOT has asked the Town to rescind this grant since FEMA now will be covering the full expense of installing a replacement Fairground Road Bridge. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Denny, to approve and sign the AOT Grant Rescission form. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**f. Status Report: Various Projects**

- 1. Economic Development Committee.** Manager Lewis noted that the committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.
- 2. Town Highway Subcommittee.** Selectman Gadbois said the committee met recently and discussed, among other items, the new Fairground Road Bridge. The new bridge will be built at the same location as the old one and FEMA will pay for everything. Manager Lewis did not consider this to be the ideal solution but the new bridge should be in place by October 1, 2014. It will be an improved bridge at the old location; the Town had informed FEMA of its preference to slightly relocate the bridge so that its eastern half would form an intersection with the west end of Lovers Lane. Selectman Gadbois added that the committee also has a list of the projects that the Highway department will be performing this coming summer. This list will be forwarded to the other Board members by the end of the week. Manager Lewis stated that the committee also looked into computer-based applications, such as vehicle maintenance, project scheduling, etc. Selectman Bradley will provide his recommendation on the appropriate laptop computer to purchase.
- 3. Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Workshops.** Selectman Denny noted that as part of State Government Municipal Day, ANR will be holding a number of workshops at the National Life Building on Monday, March 31, 2014. He has signed up for two (2), including a morning session on "Planning for Prosperity." Manager Lewis added that there is an afternoon session on "Universal Recycling Law: Everything Your Town and Citizens Need to Know."
- 4. Selectman Chris Bradley.** Chair Quinn noted that this is Selectman Bradley's final meeting before he leaves the Board. He then thanked Selectman Bradley for dedication to the Northfield community and for his years of public service.

**VIII. BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES**

- a. Approval of Minutes: February 5, 2014 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. Approval of Minutes: February 11, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- c. Approval of Bills: Warrant #17-14.** Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve Warrant #17-14 in the amount of \$31,981.14. Trustee Maxwell asked about a \$436.49 payment for "pole damage." Manager Fitzhugh explained that the Village will send a payment to Green Mountain Power (GMP) to repair/replace the pole and the Village later is reimbursed by the insurance company. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- d. Proposed Sale of Former Police Station (52 East Street).** Manager Fitzhugh has prepared a DRAFT "Sealed Bid Auction" document. Attorney Bill Smith has included his previous recommendations into this DRAFT but Manager Fitzhugh would like feedback from the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees regarding final wording. Trustee Beal asked about the requirement that the buyer must redevelop the property within twelve (12) months. Manager Fitzhugh is going to check with Attorney Smith to see if this is appropriate as well as confirm whether this conforms with Northfield's current zoning bylaws, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked why the buyer shouldn't be able to do whatever he wants with his property. Manager Fitzhugh stated that one purpose behind this property sale is to encourage downtown development. He felt that property ownership has both rights and responsibilities. It is the Village's intention to see this particular property upgraded as the current structure is in need of major repairs. Manager Lewis believes that this clause is a good idea as it will get the property buyer moving forward on improvements. Selectman Goslant is concerned that all these stipulations reflect some bias in how this property should be used and he wonders if these restrictions are even legal to impose on a private buyer. Trustee Beal stated that the Village does have the right to prevent misuse of this property. This is often done in Vermont communities that have designated downtown or historic districts so that the value of neighboring properties is not diminished.

Selectman Goslant noted that the Northfield Savings Bank will be taking down some of its structures in the area regardless of how this particular property is developed. Selectman Denny stated that the Village Trustees are making these judgments not as individuals but as the elected custodians of Village-owned properties. Trustee Maxwell noted that even in sales between private individuals there can be attached covenants that prohibit future development that would adversely affect adjacent properties, such as unimpaired scenic views, noise restrictions, etc. Selectman Bradley added that the Village Trustees have repeatedly stated that they would be including the Town Selectmen in the final decision-making process. Manager Fitzhugh said that he still welcomes any suggestions on how to proceed with this property sale. Trustee Maxwell agrees with Chair Quinn that the suggested bid opening date of Friday, March 21, 2014, does not provide sufficient time for potential buyers to inspect the property, etc. He would favor postponing the deadline to submit proposals until late April. Trustee Beal would like the entire sale process, including the forty-five (45) day appeal period, concluded before the effective date of municipal merger (07/01/14).

- e. **Status Reports: Various Projects.** There was nothing additional from the Village Trustees.

**IX. MANAGERS' REPORTS**

**a. Village Manager Fitzhugh**

1. **Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Roof Repair.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the Village received one (1) bid to install new roofs at the WWTF and an adjoining building. The bid amount was about half of what had been anticipated.
2. **Public Service Board (PSB) Payment Refund Inquiry.** Manager Fitzhugh recently received a PSB letter that inquired about the ability of the Northfield Electric Department (NED) to issue refunds to its customers should it raise its rates in anticipation of a rate increase that is subsequently denied. The MUNIS software that NED now uses cannot do this automatically so any refunds would have to be calculated by hand. The PSB would like a response by April 1, 2014 on how NED would develop a plan to upgrade its software, etc. Manager Fitzhugh noted that NED has not had a rate case for some time and it never has raised its rates prior to approval of a rate increase. Trustee Beal suggested that perhaps the Village should look beyond MUNIS and look for another software system that could accommodate such requests.
3. **Central Street Water Project.** Manager Fitzhugh recently explored the possibility of using State of Vermont interest-free loan funds to engineer the needed improvements to the water distribution system on Central Street. However, Finance Director Baroffio informed him that the expenses associated with the South Phase of the Water project will come due in the coming year and will add about \$4.00 to each monthly water bill. For this reason Manager Fitzhugh would like to hold off on any work on Central Street for now (since this phase of the Water Project is anticipated to cost more than \$1,500,000).

- b. **Town Manager Lewis.** Manager Lewis asked if there were any questions or comments regarding his written report. There were none.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items.** There was none.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn.  
**Motion passed 8-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular meetings of the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees respectively held on March 10 and 11, 2014.